



Head Coach Wes Miller Press Conference
Cincinnati 69, UIC 58
Nov. 6, 2023

Opening Statement

"I think everybody in that locker room puts a lot into this and worked really hard, sacrificed a lot. So, the first thing I will say is enjoy the win. A lot goes into this and we're hard on these guys. I can be the devil sometimes to them, but I'm going to let them enjoy a win tonight because they got the first one under their belt. I'm proud of that and happy about that. I'm going to be positive on the first night. That's what I'm going to do, I'm going to be positive, but when it hits midnight, I'm going to go to being negative, because we have a lot to work on. But two for 16 from three for them. I thought that was really good. We talked a lot about how we were going to guard number 50, Filip [Skobalj]. We were really worried about his shooting. He was really impressive on film and a guy that you felt could come in here and make seven or eight threes. So, we made a big emphasis on how we were going to try to run him off the line and I was really proud because he was zero for three tonight and he didn't get many looks. We were also really concerned about Jaden Brownell shooting, he was zero for four from three, so I liked how we got to the three-point line. I thought we had some really good defensive possessions at times. When you hold them under 60, you're pleased with that. We did not defend the rim well; I think you guys saw that. I think we broke down a bit by letting the ball get to the middle and we shouldn't have, we didn't come over to help, make plays blocking and making people miss enough. That's some stuff we're going to get to in the film. I was disappointed in that. I thought if we defended the rim a little better it could have been a nice defensive night, but that'd be the stuff that we really have to get back to the film and try to learn from. Offensively when you go five for 25 from three and most of them are really clean, good looks, the right shots and you still win by double figures, you're pretty dang happy as a coach. Those are the good wins because we're going to be a good shooting team and man, I thought there were some really good looks that just didn't go, especially there in the second half, where we could have really broken open. So, five for 25 you don't like that, but when you win by 11 and shoot five for 25 that's a good sign because it means you did some other things well. I wasn't really pleased with our rebounding. I think this has to be a great rebounding team. We've shown that we have the ability to do that at times in the preseason. So, when you win the boards 39-36, but let's be honest, they're not really crashing hard. I was really disappointed we gave up six offensive rebounds to them and I thought that was just missing boxouts and being a little bit lackadaisical when the shot goes up. So, I was disappointed in that and I thought we could have had more intent. I mean, we had like three offensive rebounds early in the game and it felt like we didn't get another one in forever, we have to crash the boards. All

that said it's good to get the first one under our belt. It was great to see some of these new guys have their first game as a Bearcat and have some good moments. It was great to see John Newman back out there. He looked like he was dead in the second half he was winded, but we'll get him back in game shape."

On CJ Fredrick's performance in front of family and friends

"I thought CJ [Fredrick] was great in the first half. He was not only good at making shots but also making the right plays with the ball. At the end of the first half, we had a play designed to get him a quick three, but they ran him off the line and he gets Day Day [Thomas] a wide-open look. It's the playmaking from him that I think is underrated. He scared me half to death when it looked like he got hurt but he is fine and is going to be really important to this team."

On Day Day Thomas' and Jizzle James' first games as Bearcats

"I liked seeing those guys get their first game under their belt. I thought Day Day was amazing. He's going to make a lot of plays. He is really good, and I think that's pretty clear. He has some things he's got to learn quickly at this position because playing point guard at this level is very difficult. He's got some things he's got to learn quickly. Jizzle [James] looked like a freshman at times defensively tonight. I believe he is going to be able to learn a lot from this tape because a lot of his mistakes resulted in baskets being made. I think it was good for him to get those minutes and he's going to have a great freshman year. It is going to take a little bit of time to get used to this level of basketball. The good thing is both of these guys are going to learn a lot from this film. They are the right kids and they are going to be fine. They just have to grow quickly for us."